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15. (New) A method of providing multi-transaction services according to claim 14, wherein the second, fourth, and fifth layers (L2, L4, L5) comprise the middleware NCR Top End.

16. (New) A method of providing multi-transaction services according to claim 9, wherein (i) the plurality of channels comprise retail service channels including at least two of a point of sale service, an automatic vending service, and a loyalty card service, and (ii) the operation means comprises at least a relationship database.

REMARKS

I. INTRODUCTION

In response to the Office Action dated November 18, 1998, claims 1, 4, and 5 have been amended, and new claims 9-16 have been added. Claims 1-16 are in the application. Re-examination and re-consideration of the application, as amended, is requested.

II. DRAWING OBJECTIONS

In paragraph (1) of the Office Action, Figure 1 was objected to because it was not designated as "Prior Art".

Applicants submit herewith a Proposed Drawing Change. Applicants will submit formal drawings at a later date.

III. SPECIFICATION OBJECTIONS

In paragraph (2) of the Office Action, the Abstract was objected to because of the use of the terms "disclosure" and "means".

Applicants submit herewith a revised Abstract page that overcomes these objections.

IV. NON-ART REJECTIONS

In paragraphs (6)-(7) of the Office Action, claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite.

Applicants have amended claim 1 to overcome this rejection.

V. PRIOR ART REJECTIONS

A. The Office Action

In paragraphs (8)-(9) of the Office Action, claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by Burt et al. In paragraphs (10)-(11) of the Office Action, claims 4-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious in view of the combination of Burt et al. and Randle. In paragraph (12) of the Office Action, claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious in view of the Burt et al as applied to claims 1-3 and further in view of PR Newswire Association, Inc. article. In paragraphs (13) of the Office Action, claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious in view of the Burt et al and PR Newswire Association, Inc. article as applied to claim 6 and further in view of the Entersoft White paper. In paragraph (14) of the Office Action, claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious in view of the Burt et al as applied to claims 1-3 and further in view of Randle, Huegel, and Marcous.

The Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections. None of the cited references, taken individually or in combination, teach or suggest these various elements of Applicants' independent claim.

Applicants' independent claims 1 and 9 are generally directed to a multi-transaction services system and method. The system and method include a plurality of service request and supply channels, wherein each channel includes channel-specific hardware and software and at least one operation means includes operation-specific hardware and software. The system and method also include an integrated channel manager connected between the channels and the operation means. The integrated channel manager has (i) a first interface layer for interfacing the channel-specific components of each channel, (ii) a second interface layer for interfacing the operation means, and (iii) a third interface layer between the first and second interface layers and including at least one application service connectable to any channel in a channel-independent manner for performing one or more channel-independent functions using data supplied by the operations means, wherein the operations means is unaware of the function being performed by application service.

In contrast, the Burt reference does not perform application services in a third interface layer between the first and second interface layers, wherein the application services are connectable to any channel in a channel-independent manner, wherein the application services perform one or more channel-independent functions using data supplied by the operations means, and wherein the operations means is unaware of the function being performed by application services. Instead, the operations gateway of Burt merely interfaces the networks and the support systems, but none of the agents of the operations gateway perform any of the functions for which they take responsibility. See, Burt col. x, line y. It is the agent systems of Burt, i.e., the server systems connected to the operations gateway, that perform the desired functions.

Moreover, none of the other references overcome this deficiency in Burt. Randle is cited for disclosing a system where customers can obtain access to financial and non-financial information products and services via customer operable transceivers at remote locations, the PR Newswire Association Inc article is cited for disclosing the OCCA structure as including 5 layers, Huegel is cited as disclosing a self-service terminal for selecting and dispensing tickets, Marcus is cited for disclosing the storage of electronic funds transfer transaction data in relational databases as a function of an electronic funds transfer system, and Entersoft White Paper is cited as disclosing NCR TOP END, which possesses, among other attributes, transaction monitoring capabilities, the enabling of distributed applications to communicate with each other, and the ability to provide critical services needed to manage the execution of applications. However, nothing in these references teach or suggest the structure of Applicants' invention. Thus, even if combined, the references do not teach the Applicants' invention.

Thus, the Applicants submit that independent claims 1 and 9 are allowable over the cited references. Further, dependent claims 2-8 and 10-16 are submitted to be allowable over the cited references in the same manner, because they are dependent on independent claims 1 and 9, respectively, and because they contain all the limitations of the independent claims. In addition, dependent claims 2-8 and 10-16 recite additional novel elements not shown by the cited references.

VI. CONCLUSION

In view of the above, it is submitted that this application is now in good order for allowance and such allowance is respectively solicited. Should the Examiner believe minor matters still remain that can be resolved in a telephone interview, the Examiner is urged to call Applicants' undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

Morag M. Eaton et al.

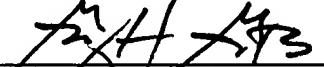
By their attorneys,

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